HQ HomeBrew Presents

Ambiance, Barriers, & Cash for HeroQuest

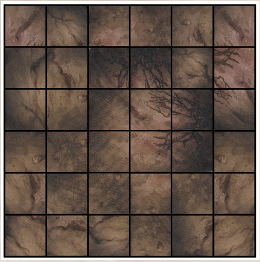
The final GLOOMHAVEN chits adaptation, part 3, for my HeroQuest game. As with the previous adaptations I am using the chit artwork as an inspiration to derive concepts. This particular article focuses on the ideas of Ambiance (the atmosphere of the board), Barriers (crowd control / limit access), and Cash / Cachet (wealth in coins and / or reputation). These non-related concepts are not as straight forward as in the previous articles. Though as with the previous articles I have used the artwork from GLOOMHAVEN to create a unique result for HeroQuest. All of these chits are the size of a single square on the board, except where noted.

AMBIANCE

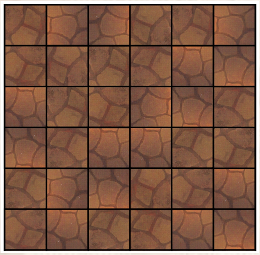
Atmosphere is important when playing a game rooted in imagination. Some players are good at seeing what they are imagining, others may need help. That is where the Ambiance overlays come into play. While the main game board displays multiple color schemes on the various locations separated by "walls" there are times that an overlay of a particular type is desired. In GLOOMHAVEN this is achieved by using one of 30 different boards to set the stage.

In GLOOMHAVEN the duel-hex chits that are used as bridges or ties between the odd shaped hex maps became the source of these overlays. Previously I used the lava hexes to produce 2 separate room sized tiles and a set of rules for how your Heroes can interact with them. This time I have provided a 6 square x 6 square block of overlay that can be printed out and cut to fit your needs. Want a hallway of sand to treat as a quicksand trap, you can cut a strip of the Parched Land for that. With this type of setup you can print as many of the tiles as you like and cut them to the shape that best serves your game. Effort went into making them variable and still maintain my original idea of only using the stuff from GLOOMHAVEN. I think I was mostly successful. Blatantly obvious patterns were mostly avoided but they still work themselves in when you have a a limited pallet with which to work. Here are 5 overlays I have created using theses hexes.

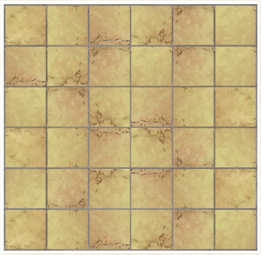
Badlands



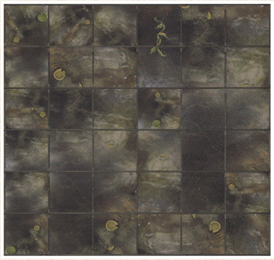
Cobble Street



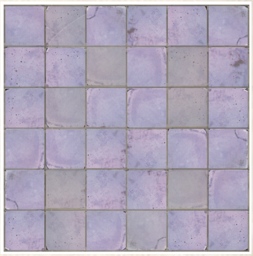
Parched Land



Wet Murk



Slate Floor



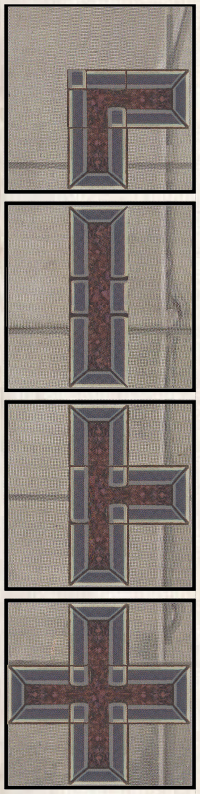
Full sized versions, suitable for printing are at the end of this article.

BARRIERS

Barriers have been a method of defending places and things since people figured out how to stack stuff to prevent other people from invading their space. Barriers have lots of names and styles but in the cramped confines of the HeroQuest dungeon barriers fall into the 3 basic types: **Structural**, **Bulwark** and **Barricade**. Each type is treated differently, though they can all be be combined with some small barrier adjacent options to nasty effect.

1) **Structural:** These are the support walls, often made of earth and stone when in a dungeon, stone and wood when above ground, glass and other exotic materials or energies, when in enchanted places. Their function is to denote the passages and separations of the structure. These types of walls differentiate the areas of a location into rooms and halls as well as to separate the “inside” from the “outside”.

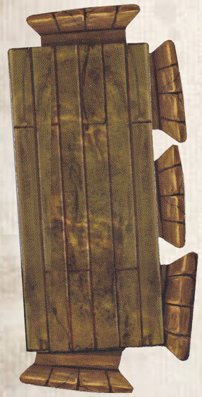
Most of the time these walls are printed on the game board or printed on the overlay tile. The general assumption is that they are stone, thus allowing the pass through rock spell to be used. If, however, the wall is not stone the Heroes should be made aware of it when they first encounter the change from stone to whatever the new substance actually is. Unless of course there is an illusion that makes them look like stone....



2) **Bulwark**: A low wall used to block or limit access to an area and yet allow individuals behind it to attack the people in on the other side of it. These are generally permeable to the correct individuals, or to individuals with adequate support to facilitate the forcing of their way through, or over, the bulwark. The height of a bulwark is generally just over half the height of the people that built it. Thus a goblin bulwark might be slightly higher than the knees of an elf or human. Much like a human bulwark is slightly higher than an oger's knees.

Ranged combat over a bulwark is effectively unhindered at a distance of 4 squares on the outside of the bulwark. Standing and shooting at what can be seen is the whole point of ranged combat. However the closer the enemy approaches the bulwark the less of the target is seen by the shooter. Assuming the enemy is the same height as the shooter, when the enemy is in the third square outside the bulwark they will roll 1 additional Defense Die versus ranged attacks. In the second square outside the bulwark, they roll another 1 additional Defend Die. When the enemy is on the square adjacent to the outside of the Bulwark their defense to ranged attack is increased by 3 Defend Dice total versus ranged attacks from inside the bulwark. By the time the enemy has reached the outside of the bulwark slightly more than half their body is concealed from the shooter inside the bulwark.

Hand to hand combatants on both sides of the bulwark have additional defenses from each other. Each gains 1 Defense Die from the other. However, spear or halberd wielding defenders may thrust past their cohorts, and their attacks are considered unblockable as though they were a second attack. In this way the massive quantities of variables have been simplified. However, hand to hand fighting is far more difficult for the attackers than the defenders. Attackers must successfully climb over the bulwark, this requires an action, 4 movement, and end in an empty square. Then they hope they are not done in by the weapons of the defenders. Often the defenders will have extra supplies and rested troops in reserve to swap out the front line as the fighting continues.



3) **Barricades:** Often these types of barriers are haphazard or poorly constructed due to time constraints. They are mostly piles of whatever materials are available. Generally barricades are used to reinforce poor defenses. Sometimes barricades can be used to direct the flow of people or animals in a preferred direction, also known as crowd control when used in this manner. For the barricade I elected to use the table and chairs from the GLOOMHAVEN double hex. HeroQuest has good quality miniatures, it needed something that reinforced the flimsy nature of a barricade. The table and chairs have always been a trope as a last ditch barricade and I felt the flat nature of the card stock scenery was appropriate. Now with the release of the new First Light set for HeroQuest there are a lot of flat card stock chits to use as a barricade.

In order for the barricade to be used there must be scenery available in a room determined to be safe by the Heroes. The table, throne, weapon rack, bookcase, or cupboard can be used as a barricade.

The fireplace, torture rack, alchemist's bench and sarcophagus are too heavy to use as a barricade. 2 Heroes must agree which scenery to use and each spends their action for a turn. The scenery is removed from the board and the selected barricade tile is used. If you do not own First Light, then grab the table and chairs barricade chit and use it. If you have the miniatures, turn them on their side.

Defensive Barricade: Place the barricade over the opening it is being used to block. When used as a defense the barricade slows enemies trying to pass it. Their movement is reduced by 2 for each square the barricade occupies, they must spend an action, and end their move in an open square. If it is blocking an open doorway or hallway the barricade may be shot over in the same manner as the bulwark. It provides little in the way of actual defense for the individuals hiding on either side of it. Figures adjacent to either side of the barricade gain 1 Defense Die from attacks on the other side of the barricade. The defensive barricade placed in a hall must occupy 2 adjacent squares, unless it is the throne.

Control Barricade: Place the barricade over the squares to be controlled. Enemies and heroes wishing to pass over it have their movement reduced by 2 for each square of barricade they are traversing, must spend an action, and must end their move in an open square. Or, they can follow the path of least resistance and move through non-barricaded squares.

Barrier Adjacent Options

Murder Slits: Long Narrow clefts in the barrier that allow an adjacent crouching Arbelist to shoot unhampered at the front ranks of enemies that are advancing on the barrier. These slits negate the advantage that such enemies would normally gain advancing on the fortification. Unfortunately murder slits are large and advancing enemies with spears can use them as though they were murder holes once they are adjacent to the barrier. There can be 1 Murder Slit per square of barrier length.

Murder Holes: Circular or slightly elongated openings in the barrier used to allow defenders to use spears and halberds to stab and chop at their enemies from behind the safety of the barrier and their cohorts. Attacks made through murder holes are considered as unblockable if they hit their target, as long as that target is already involved in combat with another individual. There can be 2 Murder Holes per square of barrier length.

Barrier Spikes: Long spikes, spears, sharpened sticks or tree limbs, that are part of, and project from, the barrier are used in the same manner as the defensive barricade, only these are built into the front adjacent square of the barrier. Enemies wishing to pass over barrier spikes have their movement reduced by 2, must spend an action, and end their movement for that turn. The following turn they must pass over the barrier using the rules appropriate for that barrier type.

Ditch: Not as deep as a pit, but much longer, the Ditch is a movement slowing mechanism that harbors a secondary hazard. It may be filled with water, oil, feces, dead bodies, or sharp punji sticks. The Ditch requires movement to be reduced by 1 square and attacks from Murder Holes are always considered as unblock-able. In addition, consider the following flavor additives for your Ditch.

Water – Requires movement to be reduced by 4 while in squares adjacent to the outside of the barrier.

Oil – Fire spells and fire based attacks always add an additional 2 Body Points of damage and continue to burn as long as the burning individual is in the Ditch, causing damage every turn.

Feces – Animals will avoid the Ditch, they will not cross it or move adjacent to it. Requires movement to be reduced by 4 while in squares adjacent to the outside of the barrier.

Dead Bodies – Carnivore animal enemies must roll their mind score or less to resist eating and not fighting every round. Herbivore animal enemies balk and refuse to move close to the Ditch, they will remain a distance away in squares equal to their movement.

Punji Sticks – Individuals in adjacent squares to the outside of barrier must roll 1 Defense Die for every square they move through that is adjacent to the barrier. They take damage for every Skull they roll.

Mix it up, or combine a couple, these options can add great opportunities for Heroism, or not.

WEALTH IN REPUTATION AND GOLD

The subject of gold in HeroQuest has often been a contentious one. Some think there is not enough gold and that Heroes should get gold for "each kill", like in video games. For others it is that there is no gold "sink" to dump all that gold into once the Heroes have all their purchasable gear. Well let me present to you a few options to help you along in the never ending battle of Hero gold bloat.

1) **Heroes do not heal between quests**. Rather they must pay for healing or suffer from being wounded by starting the next quest with less body or mind points. Since there is now a purchasable healing potion it makes this a very viable gold "sink". Plus Heroes will be less likely to complain about that 15 gold they find in a bag in the wall.

2) **Hero armor degrades over time.** Borin's armor is magical so of course it will not ding, deform, or rust. However, the run of the mill armor from the equipment deck may. At the end of each quest each Hero with purchasable armor of any type, must roll their armor's Defense Dice. For each Skull rolled the armor has taken that much damage and the defense value of the armor drops by this number of Skulls. The armor must be repaired at the cost of 50 gold per Defense Die lost in this way. New armor will always cost more than repairing your old armor.

However, if a Hero starts a quest with damaged armor, and at the end of that quest rolls enough Skulls to remove all of the Defense Dice from the armor, then the armor is destroyed. This can be applied to all non magical armor types, Metal, Wood, Leather, Hide, and Cloth. I realize not all homebrewed games have these types of armor, but they are included just in case a Zargon out there is having difficulty and wants options.

3) **Brigand attacks.** With success and fame comes the possibility of attacks on the Heroes from less savory individuals. This can be achieved easily and tracked simply. At the end of a quest, Zargon should total up the amount of gold that was gained. Then for every series of quests where the cumulative total gold awarded is 500 gold or more, the Heroes will be attacked by Brigands the following quest. So for example: say the total gold gained on the first quest was only 325, no brigands on the second quest. On the second quest they gain 425 gold. Now the cumulative is over 500 gold. The third quest should have a Brigand attack on the Heroes, and the count starts again on the next quest.

Recommendations for the number, type, and power level of the Brigands are left to Zargon to determine, they know their player base best. However here are some guidelines:

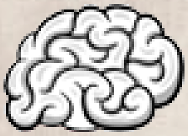
- Never use Brigands on new players or players that have not experienced at least 5 quests. Note the specification of players and not Heroes. Experienced players have experience as an advantage.
- On average use 1 more Brigand than the total number of party members including the the mercenaries, add more if you want or need too.
- Groups of unused Mercenaries and animal companions make excellent Brigands.
- Brigand attacks may happen the first turn all the heroes leave the stairs, in the first room or hall, at the beginning of the quest.
- Brigand attacks may happen at the end of the quest and be revealed when the first Hero returns to the location of the stairs.
- Brigand attacks may happen before entering or after leaving the dungeon / quest.

Brigand attacks will require some pre-planing but can add an unexpected twist to a jaded or power bloated group of Heroes.

4) **Training.** The Japanese version of HeroQuest provided an option to spend gold for a chance to raise a Hero's Body Points. Using this as a basis I provide the following options for the Heroes. As with real training and education, there is no guarantee the Hero will benefit from it, particularly the more they train.

After each quest, Heroes may train or work on their education. This is a gamble that may pay off, or may not. The chances grow slimmer as the Hero progresses. The charge is per attempt, not attempt per statistic. To attempt this training or education the Hero must pay a cumulative 500 gold for each opportunity, first attempt is 500 gold, second attempt is 1,000 gold and so on. It will not be refunded.

The Hero then decides if they are going to attempt to raise their Basic Statistic for; Mind, Body, Attack Dice, Defense Dice, or Movement Dice. The statistic selected cannot include bonuses from Artifacts, Armor, Weapons, Potions or any other bonus. The process to increase each statistic is different as follows:



Mind Points – The Hero rolls a number of White Combat Dice equal to their basic Mind Points statistic. They are successful if no black shields are rolled.

Example: The Wizard rolls 6 White Combat Dice, the result is 4 white shields, 1 Skull, and 1 Black Shield, the Wizard fails to gain the additional Mind Point.

Second Example: The Elf rolls 4 White Combat Dice, the result is 3 skulls and 1 white shield, the Elf gains one Mind Point raising their basic statistic to 5 Mind Points. This Mind Point is now part of that Elf's statistic line and may be lost or regained as normal. It is not considered as a bonus.

Body Points – The Hero rolls a number of White Combat Dice equal to their unmodified Body Points stat. They are successful if all dice are skulls.

Example: The Dwarf rolls 7 White Combat Dice, the result is 4 white shields, 3 skulls the Dwarf fails to gain the Body Point.

Second Example: The Barbarian rolls 8 White Combat Dice, the result is 8 skulls, the Barbarian gains one Body Point raising their statistic to 9 Body Points. This Body Point is now part of that Barbarian's statistic line and may be lost or regained as normal. It is not considered as a bonus.

Attack Dice – The Hero rolls a number of White Combat Dice equal to their unmodified Attack Dice statistic. They are successful if all dice are Black Shields.

Example: The Barbarian rolls 1 White Combat Die, the result is 1 white shield, the Barbarian fails to gain the additional Attack Die.

Second Example: The Monk rolls 2 White Combat Dice, the result is 2 black shields, the Monk gains one Attack Die raising their basic statistic to 3 Attack Dice. This Attack Die is now part of that Monk's statistic line and may be lost or regained as normal. It is not considered as a bonus.

Defense Dice– The Hero rolls a number of White Combat Dice equal to their unmodified Defense Dice statistic. They are successful if all dice are White Shields.

Example: The Dwarf rolls 2 White Combat Dice, the result is 1 white shield and 1skull the Dwarf fails to gain the Defense Die.

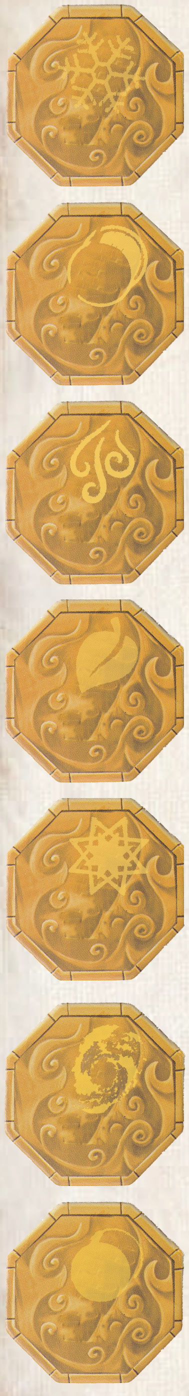
Second Example: The Barbarian rolls 2 White Combat Dice, the result is 2 white shields, the Barbarian gains one Defense Die raising their basic statistic to 3 Defense Dice. This Defense Die is now part of that Barbarian's basic statistic line and may be lost or regained as normal. It is not considered as a bonus.

Movement Dice– The Hero rolls their Red Movement Dice and compares the total to 7 (this is a fixed number). They are successful if the total of the Movement Dice is less than 7.

Example: The Druid rolls 2 Red Movement Dice, the result is a 3 and a 4. The total is 3+4 = 7 the Druid fails to gain the additional movement die.

Second Example: The Warlock Rolls 2 Red Movement Dice, the result is a 3 and a 2. The total is 3+2 = 5 the Warlock gains the additional movement die. This Movement Die is now part of that Warlock's basic statistic line and may be lost or regained as normal. It is not considered as a bonus. If they attempt to train this stat again they will roll 3 Red Movement Dice and compare the result to 7.

To be clear the default rule when you look at the math is that every Hero has the same Attack, Defense, and Movement value, it is their class that alters the stat-line along with their equipment. The equipment simplifies how this is applied by providing a total dice roll. For example: the Barbarian without a sword, still attacks with 1 Attack Die. It is the Broadsword that adds 2 Attack Dice and as stated “ Allows” the Barbarian to attack with 3 Dice in total while wielding it. Thus if the base stat is increased by 1 Die, all melee combat weapons will all gain an Attack Die. The Barbarian with a basic statistic of 2 Attack Dice now attacks for 4 Combat Dice with a broadsword, 2 for the basic statistic and 2 for the Broadsword.



5) **Money for Something and Nothing is Free**: The more successful the Heroes become, the more successful their town or city becomes, by draining off the excess gold. Consider that after the events in the Game System quest line, (also known as The Gathering Storm), the Heroes are up and coming Heroes of the Realm. Maybe not widely known across the Realm, yet, but they are getting there. Reputation is everything, with that in mind, consider a Tithe, Tax, Due, or a Contribution, for any social group be it a; religious cult, political patron, private society, service agency, training master, even an event agent. For each 500 gold a Hero contributes to their selected group they gain 1 ***Golden Octacle Talisman*** associated with that group. There are 10 designs included for the ***Golden Octacle Talisman***.

Uses for ***Octacle Talismans*** Before Quests

- Spend 1 before a quest, and the Hero gains a free random draw from the potions deck.
- Spend 1 before a quest, and the Hero gains an Animal companion of the Hero's choice. The animal companion will remain loyal to that Hero and adventure every quest until killed.
- Spend 1 before a quest, and hire a Mercenary of the Hero's choice. The Mercenary will remain loyal to that Hero and adventure every quest for no additional fee until killed.
- Spend 1 before a quest, and the Hero gains access to their social group's special market, what is there and for how much is up to the Zargon of the game.
- Spend 2 before a quest, and the Hero gains access to the Scroll Library and selects a specific Spellscroll from the Spellscroll deck.

Uses for ***Octacle Talismans*** After Quests

- Spend 1 after a quest to, repair all equipment for one Hero.
- Spend 1 after a quest to, heal all Body Points for one Hero to their base statistic.
- Spend 1 after a quest to, restore all Mind Points for one Hero to their base statistic.
- Spend 3 after a quest to, return a Hero slain in that quest, to life. If their items were lost to a wandering monster, they are still lost, including ***Golden Octacle Talismans***. The Hero returns to life retaining any training that they had received. Bonuses from items, blessings, boons, or other methods are lost to the returned Hero.

Uses for ***Octacle Talismans*** During Quests

- Spend 1 at the beginning of a Bandit Attack, to convince the Bandits the attack might not be in their best interest. Any 1 Hero is all that is required to spend their ***Octacle Talisman***. Though that Hero must be in the area of the Bandit Attack, and must have an ***Octacle Talisman***.
- Spend 1 to influence an NPC Enemy to provide information (Zargon's choice of information).
- Spend 1 to convince up to 4 NPC Town Folk to assist in a battle. Town Folk are not mercenaries. They are effectively 1A/2D/2M/2B with a move of 6. They will fight only, not search, not scout ahead, and not run headlong in to known traps. Towns folk must be available in the quest and cannot be hired like mercenaries.
- Spend 1 to convince all enemies in a room with a Mind value of 2 or less to throw down their weapons and leave in peace.
- Spend 1 to activate any option that may be activated with the spending of a Reputation Token.

6) **Reputational Reality**: If perception is reality, then the reality is mutable to reputation. The idea that options exist to individuals due to their reputation is common across all walks of life. From the hero that is provided perks because of their status to, the royalty that receives the highest quality items, to the most sought after captain with the option to hand pick their crew, reputation affects all interactions. As Heroes progress they may be approached by other individuals of power like, foreign dignitaries, guild leadership, civil groups, smuggler contacts, or anyone else that an enterprising Zargon may find interesting. The surplus of ***Octacle Talismans*** in a group of Heroes may be the factor that draws the attention of these powers to the Heroes. If their reputation rises or drops it may affect how they are perceived and the quests they receive.